

Section II

Silvicultural Analysis and Management Recommendations



Introduction to Data Collection Processes

Earth Spirit Educational Services, Inc., a not-for-profit environmental organization, was contracted by Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District in conjunction with Erie County Bureau of Forestry to collect field data for the 2003 Erie County Forestry Management Plan. This plan, involving the analysis of thirteen County Forest Lands containing approximately 3,153 acres, seeks to update and expand upon information originally collected as part of the 1965 Erie County Forestry Management Plan. It is therefore, the goal of this project to determine the current status of these Forest Lands and to subsequently develop a responsible multi-use management plan for these forests.



An Earth Spirit crew member measures the diameter of a Red Maple that grew when the stand was an open field.

The information for this plan was collected and prepared by staff ecologists during an eleven week period between August 4 – October 17, 2003. Data sheets, developed in conjunction with the Erie County Forester, were focused in the areas of Forest Analysis, Ecological Overview and Wildlife Ecology. Following the analysis of this field data, general recommendations were provided relative to harvest potential, wildlife

habitat, soil/watershed protection and recreational/educational opportunity. And finally, these materials were forwarded to a Senior Forester with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in order to support his analysis and subsequent recommendations for the management of these Erie County Forest Lands.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of the field data collection, Earth Spirit staff worked in conjunction with a variety of County and State resources. For the purpose of standardizing the data collection information and procedures, Earth Spirit Ecologists joined with the Erie County Forester and representatives from both the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to conduct the fieldwork. These individuals, all responsible for different aspects of the Forest Management Plan, continued to meet and conduct fieldwork on a regular basis in order to ensure accuracy and consistency with regard to data collection. In addition to this team of professionals, support for the data collection process was also provided by student interns from the Environmental Studies Program at the University at Buffalo.

Upon completing the field data collection for the 2003 Erie County Forestry Management Plan, it is apparent to our staff that the County possesses valuable resources and unique opportunities. These thirteen Forest Lands (designated as Lots 1-13 in the Plan) represent a natural “treasure” that potentially enables Erie County to generate revenues through a selective harvest, protect unique and sensitive areas for wildlife and designate specific lands for recreational and educational activities. In this regard, a responsible Management Plan based on a multi-use approach and sound ecological analysis provides substantial benefits to both the natural communities and the citizens of Erie County.